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SECESSION

VINDICATED.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Piece was written with a view to Publication in a different form; in which it is not unusual to Address the Public in the Plural Number. For reasons, which it is needless to specify, this intention has been changed; the present form has been chosen, but the use of Plural Words has been retained. In Pamphlets this is uncommon, but in this deviation from general practice there seems to be no material impropriety; the deviation is sufficiently accounted for by this explanation.

BURTON-HALL, *Jan.* 10, 1799.

THE  
SECESSION  
FROM  
PARLIAMENT  
VINDICATED.

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By the Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL,  
*LATE CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSOCIATION OF THE  
COUNTY OF YORK.*

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THE  
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PARLIAMENT  
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**I**N the last Session of Parliament it was obvious, and in less distressing circumstances it would have been amusing to observe the eagerness of the Ministers' partizans, in their attempts to blait the characters of their Seceded Opponents. They neither felt the dignity of their conduct, nor comprehended its utility. With strange inconsistency they lamented the retirement of Senators, whose counsels they constantly rejected ; and censured them for violence of conduct, because they ceased to dispute, where they had found it impossible to per-

in the scale of Legislative Authority. But when this system of powers and weights, mutually combined and mutually opposed to each other, happens to be deranged, the means to rectify the machine, and restore the proper movement of its disordered parts, have not been unprovided. When dangerous disputes have arisen between the Executive Power and the Parliament, the PEOPLE are the UMPIRE to whose judgment alone they can be referred, and by whose decision they can be happily adjusted. On such emergencies, the Crown may dissolve the Parliament, in order that the sense of the People upon the disputed points may be authentically declared by a new choice of Representatives. This has been often done; and it is fit that this Right of Appeal against the majority of Parliament should be possessed by the Crown. In this manner the mischiefs of Legislative Discord may be prevented with ease; the pins and bolts which disturbed the motion of the political machine may be quietly removed, and the necessary harmony and co-operation of its various parts may be safely restored. But the Liberty and Happiness of the Community may be endangered or destroyed by majorities in Parliament corruptly leagued with the Crown, as without this power of Appeal they would have been by majorities factiously combined against it. In fact, the evils which might result from the corrupt league

alluded to, are more to be dreaded than the mischiefs which a factious Opposition could produce. They are evils far worse, and far likelier to happen in any state of the Constitution. Were the Representation of the People duly regulated, and the duration of Parliaments shortened to their ancient period of a year, a factious Opposition thwarting at once the will of the Crown, and the wish of the People, would be almost an unheard-of prodigy. At the stated period, the Parliament in which such a Faction should start up, would be terminated, and with it would be closed the existence of so strange a Phænomenon. The confusion would be short, the difficulty would be soon got over, and National Happiness would be restored by a new Parliament. In the case supposed however, it would be wise to continue the Royal Appeal, as a Preventive of these possible evils. But then it would be still more necessary that the more fatal evils of the league alluded to, should be guarded against, by allowing the Minority their Power of Appeal by SECESSION. For even in the most improved state of the Constitution, it would be impossible wholly and at all times to exclude Corruption and honest Infatuation. Circumstances are conceivable, in which Parliament might prove unfaithful to its trust; and a majority of its Members, panic-struck by popular turbulence, or basely sold to the Minister, might be willing to surrender every valuable Right of the Nation. In such a con-

juncture, it is evident, that PUBLIC RUIN would be almost unavoidable. No factious majority opposed to the Crown, could reduce the Country to so perilous a state. It was foreseen by the sagacious Cecil, that England might again be placed in this situation of extreme danger, as it had been once before, in the stormy reign of Henry the Eighth. Hence the solicitude of that honest Statesman, to warn his Countrymen, "THAT THEY COULD ONLY BE RUINED BY THEIR PARLIAMENT." Henry was stern and resolute: Enriched by the spoils of the Church, and armed by his new Penal Statutes, with a formidable power, he finally obtained a more absolute command than any of our Monarchs. After many base compliances, his Parliament gave to the Royal Proclamations the force of Law. This single vote invested that bloody and capricious Tyrant with the unbounded power of Despotism. In a subsequent reign, indeed, this Law was repealed; if so, this Statute must be termed, and not rather deemed, an unauthorized Act of Treachery, and a Nullity destitute of legal authority. By this repeal, however, the greatest political evil was for that time happily excluded. But Treachery which was committed then, may be again committed. We have ceased indeed to be alarmed by Prerogative. But if the means of Undue Influence are now increased, if the manners of the Public are more luxurious and enervate, and its character feebler and proner to corrup-

tion in this reign than they were in the rude and simple age of Henry the Eighth, we have but to conclude, that a breach of Trust, as fatal as that, is now as likely to be committed ; that Venality may sell, or Infatuation yield, what fear then surrendered ; and the loss never may be repaired by the subsequent remorse or resipiscence of Parliament. And we shall be still more powerfully compelled to adopt this conclusion, if we accord with those who have long contended, that the Representation of the People is in a state so depraved, that without a Radical Reform in this respect, neither the Liberties of the People can be safe, nor the permanence of a virtuous Administration can be secured.

In any state of the Constitution, therefore, whether pure or depraved, Secession must be allowable. It is the appeal of a minority in Parliament, against the obliquity, the infatuation, or the treachery of a majority. And in this case, as in that of the Royal Appeal by Dissolution, the PEOPLE are the UMPIRE to whom the Appeal is made. It is a measure consonant with the principles of the Constitution ; and it may be absolutely necessary, as the only possible Preventive of Ruin.

But that the exercise of this discretionary power of Secession may be justifiable, there

must be an emergency of great Public Danger ; there must be a moral certainty, from the continued obstinacy of Parliament in adhering to measures of a pernicious tendency, that farther Debate will be altogether useless ; that a timely change of counsels is not to be hoped from the unassisted wisdom of Parliament ; and consequently, that a National Deliverance can only be effected by a just and constitutional interference of the People. Under these circumstances there is an actual necessity for their interposition ; which will, and which alone can justify an Appeal to the People by Secession. When the necessary means of safety have not been spontaneously, and in time applied by Parliament, what the reason and eloquence of the minority have in vain recommended, may be obtained by the decisive authority of the Public Opinion. On a timely declaration of that opinion may hang the last hope of salvation ; and Secession, with a view to procure it, may thus become a necessary Act of Duty.

It is true, that the trust and confidence of the Nation have usually been reposed in Parliament ; and it is most desirable that this Assembly should always deserve that confidence and trust. Parliament is, or it ought to be, the bulwark of our safety : it is the citadel of the Constitution, erected by common consent



for the defence of our Rights, against the attacks of foreign or internal Foes. They who are placed in that fortress, have, indeed, a sacred trust committed to their charge ; it behoves them faithfully to fulfil it, and to maintain their post to the last extremity. But should a majority of the garrison prove grossly negligent and false to their trust ; should it appear that cowardice or corruption had frightened or seduced them from their duty, and they had even formed a resolution to betray the citadel to the enemy, what would remain to be done by the few brave Men who continued true to their trust, and to the interest of the Community ? What, but to retreat from that post where their attendance was useless, where it would even tend to lull those whose Soldiers they were, into a pernicious security ; and warning their Fellow-Citizens, in all haste, to line the remaining works of the Constitution, to assist them in their just attempt to rescue their fortress out of the hands of a treacherous garrison. The Rules of the Constitution, and the Laws of Military Discipline would alike acquit the Senators and the Warriors, who should leave their post to save their Country. It would be a meritorious retreat from an untenable position, to that station in which they still might hope to make a glorious and successful defence.

It seems clear, therefore, that in such extraordinary cases, the Secession of Members from Parliament is perfectly defensible on the principles of the Constitution. It is their last regular Appeal to the Nation, against the obstinate folly and rashness, or the infidelity of the major part of their Trustees. And if the impending danger were evident to the Public ; if the necessity for a retreat were clear and urgent, undoubtedly the Seceding Members would be received with open arms by their Fellow-Citizens.

Such, in all probability, would be their immediate reception. But if the reverse should happen,—if their motives should be misunderstood, and, for a time, unpopularity should load their mistaken characters, it is not possible in the case supposed that the delusion could continue. Assuredly Justice would at last be done by their Country, and the band of faithful Patriots would not despair of the Commonwealth. They would consider, that their Secession had become necessary at a time peculiarly favourable, perhaps, to the arts of Ministerial deception. The Nation might be engaged in a War with a formidable adversary ; and the prejudices of ancient rivalry, mixed with terror and disgust at the dreadful excesses of a Revolution, might have been skilfully



wrought up to a pitch of furious animosity. Though the spirit of Loyalty in the great Body of the People had never been higher, or more unquestionable, yet the seditious tendency of some malignant Publications, the indiscretion of some obscure Societies, and the violence of some popular Meetings, might have been magnified, with too fatal success, to inspire a general panic. By such arts, the Nation might have been deluded into a transient dereliction of the principles of Liberty, and for a time might seem almost willing to preserve their Property and the Peace of the Country from the imagined plunder and commotion, by the sacrifice of All that Englishmen have been wont most to prize, the dignity of their Independence, and the fearless security of their Freedom. But the Patriot Statesmen, though not pursued in their retreat by the general acclamation of their Countrymen, would be supported by the applause of the wise and good, and the concurring zeal of every consistent Friend of Freedom. Past experience would assure them, that the accumulating burthens of War, and the near approach of a Military Despotism, would at length dissolve these delusions, like mists before the eyes of the multitude, and bring them back from infatuation and political stupefaction to common sense and their original feelings; that the gulph into which they were just ready to be precipitated, would be discerned before it was too

late; that the RUIN, which, at a distance, had been in vain pointed out to them, on their near approach to it, would be seen impending over their heads, and threatening instantly to overwhelm them. Undoubtedly, when that moment has arrived, the Nation will start back with horror equal to its astonishment; and the Patriots, whose warning voice had long been disregarded, will ultimately be hailed, with a rapture of gratitude, as the DELIVERERS of their COUNTRY.

Such will be the remote, or more immediate approbation, which will assuredly attend the measure of Secession, on any emergency of great and urgent necessity. And if it be certain, when thus circumstanced, finally to receive the applause and support of the Nation, it is a matter comparatively unimportant to inquire, whether the conduct of the Seceded Members has met the approbation of their respective Constituents. It is probable, that their applauding voice would anticipate or confirm that of the Public. But, if from some strange misconception, or some peculiar ignobility of mind, the Constituents of any one of these generous Members could disapprove and censure his Appeal against a corrupt and over-bearing majority, doubtless, when this discordance of sentiment appeared, he would resign his trust. Having thus given them the opportunity of a

more congenial choice, he would have fulfilled, in every point, the arduous duty of a Representative. His Constituents might desert and reject, but they could not dishonour him. Under their injustice he might well console himself with the conscious satisfaction of Virtue, and the general gratitude of his Countrymen : and at the close of his Parliamentary Life, adopting the words faintly uttered by the virtuous Savile at the point of death, he might justly exclaim, “ *I have finished, and I have finished well.*”

It may, we trust, be now assumed without presumption, that cases of necessity may possibly exist, in which Secession would be justifiable, and even highly meritorious. But little will have been done for the exculpation of our Retired Statesmen, by proving the truth of this general proposition, unless it be also shown, from the particular circumstances in which they stood when their Secession took effect, that their specific case is a case of necessity. On the principles of the Constitution, and on the practice which has been allowed under it, they had a discretionary power to Secede. This, we conceive, will not be denied : whether that discretion has been wisely exercised, is the more thorny question which remains for our consideration.

But here an ermined Sophister, viewing us with eye askance, and a frowning brow, seems to interrupt us. What indecency, he cries, to compare, though by the most distant allusion, the best of Princes and of Husbands, to the Tyrant Henry, the murderer of his wives ! What injustice to argue from one solitary fact in the reign of that Monarch, under whom the Parliament was over-awed by Prerogative, and the People were uninstructed, poor, and miserable, to aught which can be expected in these times, in which the Parliament is free and independent, and the People are enlightened, rich, and happy ! Let Secession, in some imaginary case, be allowed to be innocent ; but let speculators beware how they apply this doctrine to the present state of the Country : Let them respect the stricter regulations by which our Penal Statutes have been fortified ; and learn to curb the impetuosity of an untamed imagination, or check the indiscretion of political zeal.

It is not our intention to incur the blame of condemning the Laws of our Country. It is not our wish either to flatter or defame the mild Prince upon the Throne. We trust that we honour him as we ought ; nor more, nor less than duty requires. If the example of private virtue in the Sovereign were alone sufficient to secure to a great Nation the posses-

sion of those Rights on which its safety and happiness depend, we add, with pleasure, that Britain ought now to be contented. To the Constitution, on its genuine principles, we are faithfully attached; and it is our sincere Prayer to Providence, that, on those principles, the British Empire may ever be governed by the Family on the Throne. Were the new Penal Statutes, with their improvements, copied from the Code of Scotland, more severe and captious than they are, though we could not revere, we would obey them; and, by confining ourselves within the narrower limits then prescribed, endeavour to shun the traps of Informers, and the snares of legal Chicaners. We would willingly walk round our native fields in safety, and do our duty to the Public in these perilous times, without exposing ourselves to unnecessary sufferings, the victims of a rash and enthusiastic zeal. The public good which it is possible for private men to do, may thus, and thus only be effected; whether their efforts tend to check the headlong career of Ministers, or to arouse the People from their abject stupefaction to a just and rational concern for their endangered freedom. But when a Military Despotism threatens the Nation with an utter extinction of its Rights, caution must not degenerate into timidity, nor moderation cool to apathy and torpid inaction. The hand which trembles as it writes, will

never uphold the sinking Liberties of the Nation. We mean not to excite hatred or contempt either of our aged Monarch, or of the Constitution, impaired as it is by time, and verging to decay. If such a Monster as Jefferies now sat upon the Bench, even his cruel acuteness would not dismay us, while Juries remained the Protectors of Innocence. Relying on their impartiality, we proceed with the firmness of conscious integrity to the more invidious part of our task, viz. to consider, whether existing circumstances actually form a case of necessity in which it has been proved that Secession from Parliament is justifiable.

At a Public Meeting of a great County, a Patriot Member\* was embarrassed by a question of similar difficulty, but not then of equal danger. One of his Constituents bluntly asked him, whether Parliament was not corrupted by the Minister. The cautious, but honest reply of the Representative was worthy of his character. "If Westminster-Hall proof of Parliamentary corruption be wanted, it is not to be had; but no one but a mere Parson Adams doubts the fact." The opinion thus intimated was confirmed, in a short time, by the vote of Parliament itself, that the influence of the Crown had increased and ought to be diminished. If the incomparable Patriot alluded to were now

\* Sir George Savile, in the year 1779.



living, and the question were repeated to him, could he give a different answer? We shall not decide this point. It is true, that a partial reduction of the influence then complained of, was effected by a succeeding Administration; and though the trunk was left untouched, a few of the smaller branches were lopped from the tree of Corruption. But has not the tree recovered its losses? Has not its trunk swollen to a still more gigantic size? Has not a new growth of branches shot forth and spread their baneful shade farther than ever? These are questions which may be asked, and we answer them in the manner of our honoured Patriot, Who can doubt it? Should the Querist, dropping his figurative language, press the inquiry in plainer terms, whether the means of political Corruption have not been immensely augmented under the present Administration? Whether they have not been employed more extensively, and with a more dangerous and debasing effect, during the period of the present War, than they were in the course of our Civil War with America? We would bid the Querist go to the Minister, and ask him: let Mr. Pitt deny the fact, or defend it, if he can.

Shall we be charged with a disposition to exaggerate? Will it be objected, that from the acknowledgment of American Independence the

system of influence received a material curtailment? Let it be observed, in reply, that the influence derived from our American Colonies was lost when Congress, outraged by the haughty refusal of Parliament to listen to their petition, resolved to revolt. After that honest declaration by Parliament, and subsequently to the peace with America, our increased establishments at Home, in Canada, Nova Scotia, &c. and above all, the command of the East-Indian patronage, acquired by the present Minister, have compensated for petty reforms, and added to the fund of influence an almost incalculable surplus.

But the Minister shall not be loaded by us with the imputation of guilt not his own. The fund of Corruption has not been enlarged to its present enormous size by craft and contrivance in this reign only. It is the result of time and accident, combined with Ministerial fraud, and that passion for power which is the instinctive propensity of every Government. Through a long series of years, there has been a concurrence of many official men in measures tending to produce this effect; and the ultimate consequence of these measures, sometimes forced upon Ministers by the folly of the Nation, sometimes adopted by them as the mere expedients of the moment, has often been neither foreseen nor intended. For more than a cen-



tury this Country has been engaged with zeal in the pursuit of power, by the acquisition of territory and commercial superiority. For this purpose, settlements have been established, or acquired by conquest, in every quarter of the globe : some of them military posts for our army ; some of them convenient stations for our fleets ; the rest Plantations in islands, rich in the various productions most saleable in the markets of Europe ; or Continental Colonies, by our fostering care, gradually reared up to populous Provinces ; while the mercantile Directors of a few factories on the coast of India, by a sudden Revolution, have been transformed into the Sultans of extensive kingdoms, subordinate only to the Monarch of Britain. Hence the wars with which we have been so frequently harrassed, with short intermissions of peace ! Hence the mighty growth of our army, our navy, and our multitudinous establishments at home, and in our provinces abroad. Hence the enormous and still-increasing burthen of our taxes, and the overwhelming accumulation of the patronage of the Crown ! Dazzled by the splendour of our naval exploits, flattered by conquest and political aggrandizement, the Nation never seemed to reflect, that too much prosperity might be our ruin ; that the successful pursuit of this system of conquest might

finally overturn the balance of the Constitution.

It is the acknowledged office of Parliament to controul the Executive Government, and in different ages it has performed that duty with varied success. In the earliest period of the Constitution, the Crown possessing with its legal powers an immense landed estate, was often enabled, by the weight of its property, to assume an arbitrary authority, under the pretence of an undefined Prerogative. Our Representatives were then, indeed, well connected with the body of the Nation ; Bribery was a practice unknown to the Electors ; and the corruption of Parliament itself was unheard-of and unsuspected. But over-awed by the Crown and its allies, the great Feudal Barons, the Commons feebly protected the Rights of their Constituents. The balance of the Constitution was unequally hung, the Crown was too powerful, and the Nation was frequently oppressed.

In the middle age of the Constitution, the power which the Crown derived from its vast demesnes was much diminished ; partly by improvident waste ; partly by donations for the purpose of obtaining influence and command. During that period, the People, by their industry, acquired much of that landed opulence

which the Crown had squandered, and their Representatives, still faithful to their trust, were now better able to support the freedom of the Community. In the times alluded to, a long systematic struggle took place, sometimes in the Senate, sometimes unhappily in the Field, with undecisive success. A succession of venerable Patriots then arose; and from the days of Peter Wentworth and Elliot, of Pym, Hampden, Holles and Selden, to those of Sidney and Russell, of Cavendish and Somers, their object was the same, viz. to establish on solid foundations the constitutional controul of Parliament, and the REIGN OF LAW by the administration of a LIMITED KING.

The last, and in some respects the happiest age of the Constitution, commenced at the Revolution, when that glorious object seemed to be attained, and the balance of the Constitution to be happily adjusted. But the price paid for the benefits purchased by that event was great indeed: a long War with France in the reign of William, another in that of Anne, and, by the accession of the Family of Brunswick, a perpetual entanglement in the affairs of the Continent, and an augmented risque of being involved in the bloody and expensive Wars of the Continental Powers. At the close of the second of these Wars, the Nation had acquired much foreign territory, and with those long and successful hostilities had

contracted a passion for conquest, and the unlimited command of commercial advantage. From the period of the Revolution-Wars, we also may date the commencement of the funding system, with its concomitant train of evils. For, undoubtedly, from the greater facility of borrowing has, in part, arisen the greater frequency of Wars; and thence have followed an increasing military force by sea and land, and a continual augmentation of debts, taxes, and patronage of every species. The consequences of this augmentation were long unheeded, and its progress still gratified the vanity, without alarming the prudence of the Nation. At length, in the space of one century, it has grown into a system of enormous extent and unspeakable danger. To the wisest Statesman, the purest Patriot, and the most sincere Advocate of our mixed Monarchy in the last generation, the growth of undue influence then was very alarming. To evince this assertion, the names of Chatham, Savile, and Blackstone, need only to be mentioned. Since their days, the danger has still been increasing, the system of influence has still been extending itself by new Wars, and a fresh acquisition of distant territory. Each new conquest has of course flattered the victor Nation with another map of its demesnes, and an additional list of military and civil officers. But influence derived from the gift of offices whence income is obtained, is similar, and may become perfectly

equivalent to the influence which our ancient Monarchs, our Edwards and our Henrys, derived from the donation of their lands.

And on a just estimate, it would probably be found even now, that the present Monarch possesses as great and extensive command, by the means of this species of influence, as the proudest of his Predecessors drew from his immense domain. Be this as it may, it is surely time to consider how this dangerous and increasing power may be stopt in its progress, and reduced within that limit of safety which it has so far surpassed. Among other means for effecting this necessary purpose, Peace is at once the most desirable and the most efficacious. It is time to finish this calamitous War, not solely for the interests of humanity and religion, so grossly outraged by the pretence that for their defence it was undertaken, but also for the sake of our domestic happiness, and the safety of the Constitution, now so evidently endangered by its continuance. The War, commenced on these hypocritical pretences, no longer can be denied to be a struggle for political power, and the farther extension of our Empire. To men of the plainest understanding, the consequence which may be justly apprehended is but too manifest; the balance of the Constitution may be irrecoverably destroyed by the success of our inconsiderate and unprincipled ambition. Parliament, constantly



exposed to the exorbitant influence which may thus continue to be amassed, may sink, we know not how soon, into a mere office to register the edicts of the Minister, and our Representatives may then be seen crouching at the foot of the Throne, and like the Senators of Imperial Rome idolizing, in prostrate fervility, THE EMPEROR OF BRITAIN.

The fate of the ambitious Romans ought to have been a warning to this too-aspiring Nation. During a long series of Wars, the legions of the Republic had subdued and triumphed over every foe, and Rome became the mistress of the world. But that moment when universal dominion was attained, was fatal to the liberty of the Romans. Their Consuls and Proconsuls had conquered, not for their country, but for themselves; and Rome triumphant and enslaved by the Cæsars, too late lamented that the paths of conquest and glory lead only to the grave of liberty and the public happiness.

Such may be our fate in the last and declining age of the Constitution; even so may Britain, undone by her victories, mourn in hopeless regret the complete extinction of her rights. Enervated by her luxury, debased by a long course of profligacy and corruption, she may be compelled to submit to that iron yoke of Despotism, for which her vices seem to have prepared her, though she

knows not how to endure it.—May a timely change of system prevent this worst of miseries! May Nations, as well as individuals, be taught by experience to estimate their interest aright: may they become just and temperate in their desires; may pomp and splendour cease to fascinate their minds, and bloated grandeur, embarrassed with debts and surrounded with cares and vexations, with many dangers known and unknown, no longer be preferred to the solid felicity of a safe, affluent, and honourable Independence.

But having admitted in extenuation of his fault, that many of his predecessors share with the present Minister the blame of having contributed to rear the fabric of influence to its present stupendous height; we shall not hesitate to assert, that in some important respects he is incomparably more criminal than they. Undoubtedly that Statesman, whose wisdom it is natural for him most to revere, must have warned him with earnestness to shun the evils of a still farther accumulation of influence in the Crown. To his penetrating eye the danger was plainly visible, long before the close of life. His own victorious Administration had increased it in a very considerable degree; and he lived to feel the pernicious effects of that increase. But with a magnanimous zeal for liberty, and an almost

prophetic prescience of events, he distinctly pointed out to his Countrymen the approaching danger, and prescribed in timely Reform the means to avert it. By this conduct, the most successful Minister of Great-Britain was dignified by the more valuable and lasting praise of Philosophic Patriotism. Thus enlightened by the precepts of an illustrious Father, the Son succeeded to a seat in the Cabinet, soon after the expulsion of North; when even the sordid Parliament of that Minister had recently declared, that the immense accumulation of patronage must be diminished. From the younger Pitt no farther augmentation of the fund of Corruption was dreaded by the Nation. And shortly after that rise, on his exaltation to Ministerial supremacy, he was received by the friends of freedom with acclamations of joy. They then fondly presaged, that an effectual barrier to Liberty against the inroads of Despotism would be the work of his Administration. And in the early part of it, when the bloom of youth and virtue was fresh upon him, he gave his Countrymen the promise of noble deeds, which seemed to justify their partial attachment. But, blasted by the poisonous effects of power, the bloom quickly withered and decayed; and every generous purpose, impressed by parental authority, and avowed by the zeal of his own approving heart, gave way to the lust of selfish ambition. Instead



of the Protector of their Rights, the People have found him their determined Enemy. Instead of renovating what was infirm in the Constitution, he has impaired what he found sound and vigorous. Under his direction, the fund of influence has received a rapid extension; the debt and taxes of the Public, its establishments, civil and military, have been increased in a prodigious degree, and these dreaded instruments of Despotism are wielded by the Minister with a skill and ability which double their force. Dexterous and bold, he seizes every advantage; and makes every event, in some mode, available to his purpose. Nothing is so minute as to escape the vigilance of his eye; nothing is so vast, so difficult, or perilous, as to intimidate the daring intrepidity of his mind. Artful and successful in the greater operations of Coalition with powerful men, in the smaller appointments of office he is equally attentive and exact. In the distribution of honours, titles, ribbands, garters, though more profuse than the most unscrupulous of his predecessors, he succeeds in supporting the value of these baubles; and the coinage of this inexhaustible mint, however copiously emitted, is still coveted, still undepreciated. How dangerous are his talents! How fatal is his Administration! How is he changed! How is he fallen! The friend of the young and uncorrupted Statesman will ever regret the ruin of a character which once seemed likely

to rank with the brightest in British story ; and will pity the powerful mind, exposed by too early success, to be fixed by the fascinating glare of **POWER**, and entangled irrecoverably in its serpent folds. But the Moralist and the Friend of Liberty must do more ; he must add to his regret and pity, censure and condemnation. He must abandon the Minister, who has abandoned the virtuous principles of his youth ; and resist, with resolution, the enemy of popular Rights, whose pernicious measures are now calculated to ruin that glorious cause which he before had sworn to defend.

We have seen in the preceding pages by what giant steps Despotism has advanced upon us in the short period of a century ; we have seen the mass of influence which has been accumulated since the Revolution, by our immoderate pursuit of conquest, territorial aggrandizement and the monopoly of commerce. And we have ventured to assert, that the weight thus rashly thrown into the scale of Monarchy has given the Crown that degree of preponderance now, which was hardly attained by the proudest Plantagenet, in the early period of the Constitution. It would not be difficult to show, that Miseries, not perhaps exactly similar in their form, but equal in extent and distress to those produced in any equal portion of that period, have been in the last six years the consequence of this preponder-

ance. We shall not, however, attempt to enumerate the myriads of lives lost in battle, or worn out by hardship, fatigue, and privations of every comfort far from home. We shall not endeavour to sketch a portrait of our domestic afflictions; or describe the beggary in the lower orders of the People, the general impoverishment of the middle classes, and the distress of many, even of those who rank among the affluent. The consequence of these calamities, combined with the decline of perhaps the greatest part of our manufactures, has been a melancholy depopulation, evidenced by the unexampled number of empty houses in London, Manchester, Birmingham, and other lately flourishing Towns. But let it be supposed, that the measures now pursued by Ministers for the extension of our Territory, and farther increase of Patronage, have hitherto produced no effects distressing or oppressive to the Nation: Must not distress and oppression be the inevitable consequence of a blind perseverance in this system? Must not the ruin of our Political Liberty be followed necessarily by the destruction of our Civil Rights, and the general Misery of the Community? It cannot be doubted, that so it must be. All history, all experience attests this conclusion.

But instead of insisting farther on these considerations, we shall leave them to the Reader's

reflections. We have suggested them merely with a view to lead him on with us more readily to the inference we mean to draw : and though the ingenuity of our opponents may cavil, and endeavour to invalidate the accuracy of our general statement in some inconsiderable particle, yet enough will remain clear and incontestible to warrant the inference ; namely, that it behoves us to examine what is the state of Parliament at present ; and what counteracting power remains in that Assembly to resist this mighty accumulation of influence, and protect with efficacy the Rights of the Nation.

And here we fear it will be found, that the balance which appeared to be wisely and permanently settled at the Revolution, has been deranged, not only by the increase of weight in the Monarchal scale, but also by a diminution of weight in that scale of the Legislature, in which, by the principles of the Constitution, a just counterpoize ought to be fixed.

Of the House of Lords, on this occasion, it is unnecessary, and it might be imprudent, that much should be said. But this may be observed, perhaps, without offence, that in theory the weight of that House, though usually most apt to be attracted by the Crown, is yet meant to shift ; oscillating from this scale to that ; joining now the Monarch, now the Popular Assembly,

as the interest of the Public may appear to require for the seasonable controul either of Royal Oppression, or Democratic Licence. But for a considerable length of time, the fact has not been conformable with this theory. In every reign since the death of Anne, the Peers have been inseparably united with the Crown. During this period, when the controuling Power of Parliament has been interposed, the interposition has not been the uncourtly act of the Peers. It is true, their weight has been, and it may again be thrown into the scale of Opposition. This is, indeed, possible ; but a bare and meagre possibility cannot resist the force of substantial facts, and the experience of an age. There is little probability of our being deceived by the conclusion, that the courtly complaisance of our Hereditary Senate, for upwards of eighty years, will be continued by that Assembly, until it is freed by Reform from that undue influence by which its oscillating Power is clogged and stopt. There are among the Peers, not a few of those who stand foremost in rank and opulence, in wisdom, experience, and parliamentary talents, who lament with us this fatal effect. We look up to those truly noble Patriots with gratitude for their past services to our Country, with reverent expectation of greater services to come. When, with their assistance, and the consent of the Crown, a just and temperate Reform shall

have been effected by the Commons', discontent on the one hand, and suspicion on the other, it may be hoped, will be totally removed. The advantage of an enlightened Peerage balancing the scales of Power with a firm and impartial hand, between the Prince and the People, and supporting Liberty and Public Virtue against the extremes on either side, by which they might be destroyed, will be universally felt and acknowledged. And then, undoubtedly, the Constitution in all its branches will secure the affectionate attachment of every virtuous Citizen; and the veneration now peculiarly possessed by the Noble Lords alluded to, will be justly paid to that Assembly, of which their wise and patriotic conduct renders them at once the ornament and reproach.

In the mean time, it is more than probable, that, without the intervention of some extrinsic cause, the disposition of the House of Lords will remain more generally partial to the Crown, and adverse to the popular wish, than at any former period of its institution. And, as a House of Parliament, whatever increase of importance it may have acquired from the Delegation of Scotch Peers added by the Union with Scotland, or the immense creation of Peers in the present Administration, that increased importance will all be centered in the Crown, and form with it one perfectly consolidated mass of Power.



Hopeless of assistance from the Upper House of Parliament, let us turn to survey the state of that House which more peculiarly belongs to the People. It is observed by a witty Author, speaking of the English Gentry in modern times, that nothing could equal their anxiety to get into Parliament, but the anxiety of their forefathers to keep out. There is truth in this observation ; and it is truth of serious importance. Before the reign of Charles the First, the English Gentry often declined the tendered office of a Representative. The duty to be performed was troublesome ; and the reward to be received was inadequate. About that time, the trifling wages paid by the Constituents gradually ceased to be taken ; and the Court began occasionally to adopt the policy of gaining the most distinguished Members by Offices and Honours. This policy frequently proved successful. It was more and more extensively practiced, till, in the reign of William, the entry into Parliament was fought as the first step to honourable ambition, or coveted, as opening the road to lucrative advantage. Hence the new anxiety to obtain a command in Elections, by the purchase of houses in the poorer Boroughs, with their contiguous lands and tithes ; by accumulating navigation-shares, engrossing coal-mines, and other means of affecting the trade and convenience of the inhabitants, and thus reducing them to a state of

dependence. Even in one instance, the purchase of a spring of fresh water, materially convenient to the Burghers of a large town, has been eagerly sought and completed, as no contemptible addition to power already great and predominant. With a similar design an ascendant in Corporations has been sought. In some cases, a majority of the Corporate Body has been procured to be chosen from among the relations and dependents of a powerful family. The majority once obtained, is easily increased, as vacancies in the Corporation occur. And thus the command of Parliamentary Elections is perpetually secured in the hands of the Patron.

Of these petty manœuvres the survey has been sufficient. But despicable as they are, their success has not been inconsiderable: in the course of the last century it has produced a dangerous change in the Constitution of the House of Commons.

We are aware, that, at the Revolution, several of the Boroughs were mean and insignificant places, utterly unfit to retain the trust of their Parliamentary franchise, from their absolute incompetence to exercise it aright. Yet then, Parliament, though not so well composed as it had been in the early ages of the Constitution, was still tolerably well connected with the Body of the Nation; and its conduct had been usually



correspondent with the sense and interest of the Community. The defects in the Representation, undoubtedly, were then perceived by the more sagacious Friends of Liberty. But in the infant state of Corruption, the practical mischiefs resulting from those abuses were not great, and no urgent necessity to correct them appeared to exist. It was wisely resolved, therefore, by the Conductors of the Revolution, to close, as fast as possible, the revolutionary scene. No speculative improvements were proposed; practical redress of the grievances under which they had actually suffered, was alone insisted on, and obtained. Hence the singular felicity of a Revolution in favour of Liberty, which, if not entirely bloodless, was yet effected with fewer stains of blood than perhaps any similar event. By it, what was practically wrong was rectified; much immediate good was accomplished with little or no mixture of evil; and a precedent was held forth to posterity, to be followed when a similar necessity should demand it.

But after that event, the struggle with Corruption became more and more arduous from the rapidity of its growth; and yet, from the effect of the miserable manœuvres alluded to, the strength of its Antagonist was in a state of continual decline. By those means, the command of votes in a multitude of Boroughs has

been gradually engrossed by one powerful Patron. In many other instances, an influence has been obtained by two or three families, by whose union the Right of Free Election has been equally annihilated. In England,\* it is probable, that not less than fifty Boroughs have been thus enslaved in the last age. Consequently, not less than one hundred Members appointed by the nomination of one or two individuals have been added to that number, who, before the Revolution, held their seats by a similar appointment. And it appears, from the unquestionable authority of the Petition presented some years ago to Parliament by a most respectable Body of Men, † that 162 persons do now appoint a decisive majority of the English Representation.

It is also to be lamented, that the Union with Scotland, which in other respects has been most beneficial to each of the United Nations, has, in this regard, produced a most pernicious effect. From an accurate enumeration of all the Voters

\* In Yorkshire this command has been obtained in the last age in the Boroughs of Richmond, Northallerton, Borough-bridge, and Knaresborough. Ripon, Aldborough, Thirsk, and Malton have probably been enslaved within the same period. But this is not asserted.——One 17th part of the Representation of England is shared by Yorkshire.

† The Friends of the People, who offered proof to Parliament of the facts alledged in their Petition.

in Scotland, \* their number in 1790 appeared not to exceed 4000. Of these, many are fictitious or fraudulent Voters, or the Members of a small and self-elected Corporation, by whom, in all the towns of Scotland, the Right of Election has been usurped. In these places, not a single Election has been left open to the People, and in the present crisis † the preponderance of the Oligarchy is thus increased in the British House of Commons by the whole Representation of Scotland. So crippled is the Constitution of Parliament, in this most important respect! So little community of Interest now subsists between the People and their assumed Representatives !

With regard to the duration of Parliament, the change which was effected in the last age was not favourable to the Freedom of the People, or the purity of their Representatives. Soon after the **Revolution**, a Triennial duration was established, as the most convenient period. In the reign of George the First, on frivolous pre-

\* See a Report by the Friends of the People on the State of the Representation of Scotland.

† It has been observed, that for some years every Representative of the Towns, Cities, and Counties of Scotland, has habitually supported the measures of the Minister in Parliament. Yet many of the other Scotch Gentlemen are firm and enlightened Friends to Liberty.

texts, and in a most unwarrantable mode, it was lengthened to a Septennial duration. The change has evidently tended to facilitate the seduction of the Elective Senate, and detach it more completely from the interest of its Constituents.—The shameful Corruption, now become so generally prevalent at Elections, has also a similar tendency. Thus has the fortress of our security been undermined in the last age by the subtle machinations of Fraud and Power ! Thus has the sanctuary of our Laws been thrown open, and profaned by the vilest pollution !

In this degraded state of the Constitution, weakened as it is by internal decay, and exposed externally to the formidable influence of the Crown, the Senators who have Seceded performed their duty with zeal. By them the danger of the crisis was clearly seen. They felt, that every possible effort ought to be exerted, 1. to augment the counteracting power of Parliament by Reform: 2. to prevent the calamities of War, and thus stop the increase of undue Influence: 3. to support the dignity of the House of Commons: 4. to protect the personal freedom of the subject: 5. and to maintain the fundamental Law of the Land. These were the objects of the Seceders most earnest endeavours. And, in the course of their exertions for attaining these ends, they employed talents, and mani-

tested resolution, vigour, and perseverance, which Parliament had never seen surpassed, but totally without success.

To invigorate the powers of Parliament by a temperate Reform, was the first measure proposed by this small, but respectable band of Patriots. In 1792, notice was given of their intention to move this measure by a Member, of whom Northumberland may justly boast that he is the Savile of this age\*. Immediately the House was in confusion, Corruption was alarmed, and the Minister dropt his masque. From that moment, the Reformer-Minister adopted a new character and an opposite system of Administration. A harsh Proclamation was speedily issued. The sage and virtuous friends of Reformation were branded as Seditious Enthusiasts or Revolutionary Traitors; the Nation was declared to be in danger, and a general panic was excited. After a considerable interval of time, and much deliberation, the plan for restoring the ancient purity and vigour of the Constitution was tendered to Parliament; it was a wise and comprehensive plan; it was a plan of prudence and moderation; its principle was the same which the Minister had before adopted, and its probable effect more extensively beneficial, and more prompt in the execution.

\* Charles Grey, Esq.

Yet, though thus unexceptionable in all these respects, though introduced and supported by the utmost powers of reason and eloquence, the Minister did not blush to oppose the measure with vehemence, nor the House hesitate to reject it with a decisive negative.

Baffled in their attempt to purify and invigorate Parliament, was the band of Patriots more successful in their endeavours to stop the progressive increase of the fund of Corruption, and prevent hostilities against the French Republic? No. When the Retainers of the Oligarchy declaimed with fury against the Democratic Government of France, the Minister, strong in his new alliance with them, joined in their cry for War. The friends of Peace and Liberty urged whatever arguments humanity or policy could suggest to calm the passions of an enraged Senate, and avert the uplifted scourge. They deprecated that alternative of Despotism or Anarchy to which the prosecution of even a prosperous War would unavoidably expose us; they deprecated a War of punctilio, pride, or passion, and wisely recommended an assiduous cultivation of the arts of Peace, and a steady attention to the improvement of our finances, till some great interest of our Country could only be preserved by hostilities. But they urged, they deprecated, and they advised in vain.



Punctilio, pride, and passion prevailed against the plainest reason, and the wishes and interest of a few individuals outweighed in the Senate the wish and interest of the Community. To avenge the execution of the ill-fated Louis, to defend social order, morality, and religion, to resent the obnoxious but rescinded decree of Nov. 19, 1792, to rescue Holland, though not attacked, and even to close the Navigation of the Scheldt, though not complained of, were among the most prominent pretexts for War. But their texture was too flimzy to hide the real motives, viz. the desire to depress the spirit of Liberty in England; to secure the usurped Power of the Oligarchy; and to aggrandize the Power of the Crown. The means for attaining these ends were to be found in War alone; and in a frenzy of rage it was commenced. Hence the peremptory rejection of every subsequent motion for restoring Peace, whether defeat or victory attended the Allied Armies. In either case, pretences were still at hand to justify the Minister's refusal to negotiate; and a willing House admitted them, without much examination, and almost without deigning to listen to his Opponents. When Belgium was recovered by the efforts of the Combined Army, and that of France was driven behind their own frontiers, Parliament was urged in vain to seize that favourable moment to treat, when every object

that could rationally be wished from War, might be obtained by Peace. The proposal, in the judgement of Ministers, was most ridiculous : France now might be dismembered ; our army might march to Paris ; the Republican Government might be over-turned ; and the glorious opportunity to cripple France and restore her Monarchy was not to be lost. Rouzed by these menaces, and this imminent danger, France saw that she could be saved by Union alone. Dismissing political animosities, Frenchmen of all descriptions took up arms to support the existing Government, and repel the invading foe. The efforts of that great armed Nation were irresistible ; they drove the combined troops beyond the frontiers, first of France, then of Belgium. Yet such was the embarrassment of the new Government of France, and so mighty did the force of the Confederacy still appear, that even then a Peace, nearly restoring Europe to its original posture, might probably have been obtained. Our Patriots wisely proposed and pressed it, but they proposed and pressed it without success. In the opinion of the Minister and the House, the moment of defeat was not the time for negotiation. At length, peace, or a cessation of arms, became general throughout the Continent of Europe\*.—The question so often asked with an air of triumph, Whom are we

\* Portugal was an exception, but almost too inconsiderable to be noticed.

to treat with ? was now become too ridiculous to be asked again. Twice the Minister negotiated for Peace, and twice he failed to procure it. The first of these negotiations was merely a fine-spun web of diplomatic chicane and insincerity ; the second has, in some degree, unravelled the secret of the Cabinet, and taught us for what we are doomed still to contend. Perpetual War, or the Cession of Ceylon and the Cape ! Is this the alternative ? Humanity sickens at the sound ; and every friend of rational Liberty shudders at our approaching fate. But argument and admonition, reason and eloquence are lost upon the Senate. In this fatal struggle they plunge on, regardless of our exhausted finances, and the certain ruin of the Constitution.

Defeated in their efforts to prevent or shorten the calamities of War, were these worthy Senators successful in their endeavours to support the dignity of the House, and the Law of the Land ? No. When they charged the Minister with a breach of his duty to that House, as guardian of the purse of the Nation, by having paid an immense subsidy to the Emperor without the consent or knowledge of Parliament, even during a Session, the charge was heard without emotion by the House ; the Minister avowed the fact, and his resolution to act in a familiar manner again, when he might judge it proper. His contempt of the Right of

the House was over-looked ; and his avowal, instead of aggravating his fault, in the judgement of the House, was accepted as his justification.

When they charged him with a breach of the Appropriation Law, he avowed the fact, and the House acquiesced.

To suppress the expression of public misery and discontent, more rigorous Laws were proposed, affecting the personal Liberty of the subject, and even abridging the Right of Petition, which had been transmitted down to us from the earliest times, and asserted in the modern Charter of our Liberties. The venerable antiquity of our Right was disregarded, the sacredness of a compact, by which the Monarch's title to his Crown, and the People's right to their Freedom was thought to be equally secured, was infringed, and the BILL OF RIGHTS was rudely trampled on by the Son of Chatham. In vain the Friends of the People interposed with active and indefatigable zeal, and the clearest superiority of argument to protect personal Freedom, and maintain the fundamental LAW OF THE LAND. By the influence of the Minister, the fatal Bills were passed, and personal Freedom was exposed to new dangers from legal chicane; the violation of the BILL OF RIGHTS completed the

ruin of his character, and every virtuous breast throbb'd with alarm for Constitutional Liberty.

Such were the principal circumstances in the state and conduct of Parliament and the Nation, which in our opinion formed that case of necessity in which an Appeal to the Public by Seceding from Parliament was justifiable, and even highly meritorious. And here the decision of this question may be confidently left to our Readers on this statement of the case. But foreseeing some objections, pointed rather against the Seceders than their Seccession, which may occur to persons of different political classes, we defer the conclusion of our paper for a few moments, to state the objections, and offer to each a brief, and, we trust, a satisfactory reply.

1. There are among the eager opponents of Ministers, many who admit, that no useful impression on the mind of Parliament was to be expected from any efforts of eloquence, however powerful. The audience, whose ears are stopt, like the deaf adder, cannot be moved by the Orator's persuasion, charm he never so wisely. Yet why should the Senator despair to rouse and animate the People, by the vigour of those exertions in Parliament to which that Assembly might refuse to attend? Why suffer the Public to remain so long supine and inactive, and leave



their zeal to be at last worked up to active opposition by the flow, though certain effect of Time? Because, if the energy of eloquence should stimulate their discontent, the pretext for fresh invasions of Liberty would be afforded; and thus a Revolution would be effected, or would become unavoidable. Secession thins that danger with a caution suited to the times. It is a continued Protest against the measures of Ministers, yet without popular stimulation. It is exactly that sort of Appeal which warns the upper classes, without inflaming the lower. And when the illusions of panic in the higher orders have been more completely removed by the patience of the inferior classes, under great and oppressive burthens, the Rich will see with horror that debasing RUIN which their infatuation has suffered so nearly to approach. They will fly for safety to the remaining fences of the Constitution; and their confidence will then be reposed, where it is justly due, in those Seceded Statesmen, whose counter-revolutionary measures they at present so grossly misunderstand.

2. But here the Advocates of Ministers, anxious to bring forward the discussion of an injurious personality, will, perhaps, admit that the Secession may be, what it is here represented, a measure tending rather to prevent, than to promote a Revolution. "Let this be conceded for a moment, they will exclaim; and let us turn to the consideration of another point of less difficult



determination, and too important to be overlooked. We assert, and the arguments of this paper appear to confirm the assertion, that the Seceders are no friends to the grandeur and glory of their country." Our reply is, that they are the truest friends to the grandeur and ultimate safety of Britain, not who endeavour to depress and extinguish, but who cherish and protect that spirit of Liberty, without which she never could have attained her present pre-eminence : not they who pursue, by hostilities, the farther acquisition of distant settlements, madly defying National Bankruptcy and Confusion, but they who warn their Countrymen to forbear that extension of their territory, which soon may, and ultimately must, prove the ruin of their Liberty ; and to seek the ulterior wealth, prosperity, and splendour of the BRITISH EMPIRE in the peaceful extension of our Trade ; in the improved cultivation of our Domain ; in the diminution of our load of Debts and Taxes ; in the milder and more equitable spirit of our Laws ; and in those measures of Constitutional Reform which would restore morals and public spirit to the PEOPLE, and its ancient virtue and vigour to the PARLIAMENT of Great-Britain. Such are the objects contended for by the Seceders ; and on the fate of their endeavours, the Peace, the Grandeur, and the Happiness of our Country depend.

Since the rupture of the Negotiation at Lisle, we have struggled with the enemy through one bloody defensive campaign ; and we have struggled with success. The Rebellion fomented by France, in Ireland, has been suppressed ; her troops landed in that unhappy Country have been captured ; her armaments from Brest and Dunkirk have been defeated or dispersed ; and her Toulon Fleet has been destroyed. Enough has been done to manifest the great defensive Power of Britain, and her resolution not for a moment to listen to any ignominious condition of Peace, or suffer the dignity of her INDEPENDENCE to be in the smallest degree impaired. Nothing humiliating, nothing degrading can be endured in thought by this high-spirited and powerful Nation ; and, least of all, by that part of it who are the strenuous Friends of Public Liberty. But farther acquisitions of territory are neither essential to our honour, nor conducive to our safety. The dignity of our INDEPENDENCE may be nobly maintained without them. The objects contended for were the possessions of our late unfortunate Allies. Their total value is not equal to the expence of two months hostilities. But were it greater ; to cede them to Holland would be an act of policy and true magnanimity. It would give Peace to Britain, and confirm the repose of Europe. It would be to act with that moderation which France falsely professed ; and to conciliate, by our

wiser and more benevolent conduct, the esteem of mankind. The opportunity is before us. We may with dignity and honour make the offer to negotiate again. We are secured by our victories from the fear of Invasion ; and no unworthy motive can now be imputed to us. The cruel policy of Ministers would light the flames of War anew throughout Europe ; and failing in that project, they would continue hostilities singly against France, in the mad struggle for an useless and dangerous extension of our Empire \*. That they will receive a check in this desperate career, from the wisdom of our Representatives, is too much to be hoped. It is only from the wisdom and virtue of the Collective Body, constitutionally exerted, that we can justly expect deliverance.

3. Repulsed in this attempt to injure our Seceded Statesmen, the partizans of the Minister, doubtless, will renew their attack in a different direction. They will endeavour to represent them “ As Men, who, in their eagerness for Peace, abandon the balance of Europe ; who are

\* To risque the happiness of the Empire for a Rock in Africa, and another Harbour in Asia, may well be termed desperate policy. The Cape of Good Hope cannot support its Garrison. It has been supplied with necessaries from Europe. Yet this barren, or ill-cultivated spot has a Governor with a salary, as it is said, of 12,000*l.* a-year. Ceylon also has a Governor with a suitable salary, and a Civil and Military List.—Trinidad too, and some other insignificant Islands might here be mentioned.

willing to hazard nothing to emancipate Holland and Switzerland, or to wrest Belgium and Western Germany out of the hands of the French. They are no enemies to the aggrandizement of the Republic of France; their zeal for the welfare of their Country is questionable, and they are not entitled to the confidence of the Public." The emancipation of Switzerland, Western Germany, and the Netherlands! Are these the objects for which we must engage in a new Continental War? Is this the scheme of wise and measured policy, which every good Citizen must approve and adopt? Are then the events of the late War upon the Continent so soon forgotten? Are the cautious maxims of the Court of Prussia so little understood? Can we suppose that wary Court willing to abandon France, her only stay and support against the over-grown power of Russia and Austria? Can our subsidies tempt that wise Cabinet to forego the certain advantage of sharing in the secularizations of Germany without the risque of hostilities, and to enter into the new Crusade against her Ally? For what? That the Stadtholder and the Dutch and Helvetic Aristocracies may be re-established, the Petty Princes of Western Germany restored to their estates, and Italy furnish to Austria a fresh addition to her immense Domain. Can changes so trifling or so dangerous to the interest of Prussia induce her Cabinet to alter their cautious policy? If this be inconceivable, what

consequences but miscarriage and ruin can result from the new-projected Coalition of Kings and Emperors, acting without Prussia against France? Perhaps against France assisted by that Power? Under these circumstances it is manifest that the renewal of hostilities upon the Continent would be attended with extreme danger to Austria. Hence it may be presumed, that without the concurrence of Prussia, War will not be recommenced by the new Confederacy of Monarchs\*; and the rage and animosity of Britain will only

\* Since this passage was written, it has been announced, that the troops of France have been attacked within the limits of the Roman Republic by the army of Naples: In consequence of this aggression, and the alleged discovery of intrigues carried on between the Courts of Naples and Turin, War has been declared against both those Powers by the French Directory: the Neapolitan Army has been defeated by that of France; and the formal deposition of the King of Sardinia has been effected. It is impossible not to feel compassion for this unhappy Monarch, stripped of all his Continental Dominions, and fled for refuge to that Island, an Exile, rather than a King. But his misfortune ought not to be imputed to the recent cabals and projects of our Cabinet: He was in effect dethroned, when he admitted a French Garrison into the Citadel of Turin. Whether the rash and premature movement of the Monarch of Naples will tend to promote or prevent the renewal of a Continental War, whether these events will more intimidate or provoke the Emperor, a few weeks will probably show. In the mean time, it behoves the Austrian Cabinet to consider well the energy and enthusiasm manifested by the French Government; the skill and vigour displayed by their Armies and Generals on this occasion; and, above all, the ready disposition of the People and Army of Piedmont, to adopt a Democratic Government, and to unite with the French. These are circumstances which seem to confirm the reasoning above.



serve to aggrandize Austria, by enabling her to enhance the terms of her pacification with France.

But the greatest rashness, the utmost injustice, are always possible to human folly. And War is not sure to be avoided by the two great German Powers, merely because Peace is the evident interest of one, perhaps of both. Prussia, tempted by the gold of Britain, may renounce her cautious policy, and, adopting the desperate schemes of the British Cabinet, may enter once more with her old and dreaded Rival into the league against France. Such may be the result of the pending Negotiation\* at Berlin. Yet, even in this case, we must not too hastily anticipate our triumphs, or expect with confidence the dismemberment of France. It will be more rational, perhaps, to judge the future by the past; and from the total defeat of the first Confederacy to augur a similar miscarriage of the second.

Invaded by the German Powers, and the Combined Armies of Turkey, Russia, Naples, and Britain, France will be supported by Spain, and the Democracies of Holland, Switzerland,

\* The Hon. T. Grenville was the Negotiator sent; but, unable to enter the frozen rivers and harbours of Germany, he has returned to England, after a fruitless and fatiguing voyage. The friends of humanity, and the well-wishers of England, seem to have little reason to lament the disappointment.



and Italy. Again her mighty force will be excited by the approach of imminent danger; and her revolutionary enthusiasm will be again wound up to a pitch of fury, from which the Combined Monarchs will have every thing to fear. In number their forces may surpass, and in valour, discipline, and skill equal the Armies of France and her Allies. Their mutual fears and jealousies may, for a time, be absorbed in one common desire to humble this proud Republic, and reduce her within the ancient frontier of France. For this purpose, on opening the campaign, their efforts may be directed with vigour and unanimity on one comprehensive and well-concerted plan. On their first onset, at every point of attack, success may attend their armies. But soon, or a little later, this flow of prosperity will be stopt, and the tide of War will turn in favour of the Republic. New situations will open to the Allies new prospects of personal advantage or danger; the general interest of the league will be postponed by each of the Allied Powers, to his own separate and individual interest; new competitions will arise; old jealousies and animosities will be revived; the efforts of some of the Combined Monarchs will be relaxed; the exertions of others will be diverted by private views to the pursuit of objects little important to the General Cause. The pressure upon France, by this great Confederacy, will be thus constantly weakened; while

her elastic power to resist, and finally repel their compressing weight, will be continually increased by her ardour, and the zeal of her Democratic dependencies; defeat will call forth greater and more incessant exertions in the common cause of self-preservation; success will add the incentives of glory, revenge, and conquest; and, mixing them with their passion for liberty and National Defence, exalt once more the heroism of the Republican Armies to the highest pitch. The tactics and the cool mechanical valour of the Monarchal Troops will again be surpassed by the united skill and enthusiasm of their Republican Antagonists. Checked in the first campaign, or routed in the second, the German and Italian Princes will be alarmed once more with the irruption of French Armies. The flood-gates will thus be thrown open afresh to the revolutionary torrent. The oppressed Burghers and Peasants of Germany and Italy will be hurried by it into violent commotions; the Petty Despots of \* Suabia, Franconia, Westphalia, and Tuscany will be swept off first to ruin; the greater Despot of Naples will follow them; and neither Berlin nor Vienna will be

\* The order of events, here supposed, may probably be reversed by the rashness of the Neapolitan Monarch. His unexpected march to Rome has been succeeded by a more rapid march back to his own territories. Routed and pursued by the Republicans, he feels his Crown tottering on his head, and already turns his eyes to the English Fleet for a safe convoy to his Island of Sicily.—But the argument proceeds with unaltered force.

safe. Such, in all human probability, will be the unhappy consequences of the first two campaigns of this new Continental War, so vehemently pressed by the British Cabinet. The more fatal consequences which ultimately may result from a farther prosecution of it, are too painful to be here surveyed. As Men friendly to the gradual and peaceful improvement of our species, we deprecate them from the bottom of our hearts, and willingly avert our eyes from the distressing prospect.

But should the most favourable events occur, which in this War can be supposed with any appearance of reason, what advantage can Britain expect? Let it be imagined, in contradiction to experience, that France will be unable to maintain her position, and defend her own frontiers, and those of the new Democratic Republics. Pressed by the Armies of Prussia and England on the side of the Netherlands, and by those of Austria, Russia, &c. on the Rhine and in Italy, she must resolve, either to abandon her recent acquisitions in the Netherlands and Western Germany, together with the Dutch and Swiss Democracies, or give up the Italian Republics in whole, or in part. Reduced to this alternative, and it is the utmost which can rationally be hoped, which side of it will probably be the choice of the French Directory? Doubtless, the

preservation of their frontier on the Rhine, and the maintenance of the Republics of Holland and Switzerland will be the primary object of their policy ; and the defence of the Italian Republics will be deemed a consideration of secondary and far inferior importance. At any supposable point of adversity, the Directory will hold in their hands the means of deliverance. In any possible conjuncture, they will be able to detach the German Powers from the league by ceding Mantua, Milan, Bologna, Genoa, and even Rome to the Emperor's ambition, and agreeing that a suitable compensation to his Brother Monarch of Prussia may be annexed to his Dominions in Lower Saxony and Westphalia. Under such circumstances it seems a romantic hope, that any efforts of Britain can ever restore the Oligarchies of Switzerland, and the Stadtholderate of Holland, or wrest Belgium and Western Germany out of the hands of France. It is possible, that she may be forced to make some sacrifices, and the two great German Powers may acquire the aggrandizement alluded to. But never must we look for those cessions in the Dutch and Belgic Netherlands, which alone would form to Britain a considerable object of national advantage.

By the treaty of Campo Formio, the extension of her frontier to the Rhine was ascer-

tained to France ; and that extension has been admitted by the German Empire, as the principle of the subsequent Negotiation at Rastadt. This formidable aggrandizement of our ancient Rival may justly be regretted ; but when the German Powers themselves have acceded to it, it were wise for Britain also to acquiesce. The difficulties which have retarded the Definitive Peace at Rastadt, have related solely, or chiefly to the proposed secularizations. Respecting these changes, the interests of the Empire may safely be trusted with the Princes of Germany, who are now settling with France the necessary compensations. However mortifying her interference may be to the British Cabinet, it cannot be a valid reason for a new Continental War\*.

The renewal of a General War upon the Continent, on this ground, cannot be too deeply deprecated. It would be an act of more dire temerity than its commencement before ; and the worst of evils, in every direction, may be its fatal consequence.

\* This has been avowed by Lord Grenville as one reason for another Continental War. In the debate in the House of Lords on the King's Speech at the opening of this Session, see the reply of Lord Grenville to a wise and humane Speech by the Marquis of Lansdowne in favour of Peace. Unfortunately, however, the Nation seems as little to understand the wisdom of Lord Lansdowne's pacific policy, as it appears to feel the generosity of Mr. Fox's conduct, in supporting the principles of Constitutional Liberty.



The futility of the Minister's warlike projects, and the emptiness of his pompous phrases, have been already detected. Let not the proposal of a new War for the DELIVERANCE OF EUROPE delude the good sense of the English Nation. Without our inauspicious interference, Europe will be safe; and without our foolish obstinacy to retain the conquered settlements of Spain and Holland, the hazards of internal Revolution will be removed by a General Peace, and Britain, neither endangered nor dishonoured, will again enjoy the blessings of repose, and a mild Government secured by a timely, just, and temperate Reformation of Parliament.

Upon the whole, then, we ask, who have proved themselves the most judicious Adversaries of French aggrandizement? They who foresaw and predicted, that the Confederacy of Kings against the Republic of France would prove an abortive enterprize; who with a wise caution advised Ministers to flun or shorten a conflict that might lead to ruin; who warned them that it would be perilous in the extreme to grapple with France, when the fervor of revolutionary enthusiasm gave her in some sort a præternatural power, which might produce incalculable effects; and that from the desperate frenzy into which they were preparing to goad her, conquest and crime might equally result; but were her ardour suffered



to cool by Peace, instead of planning conquests abroad, the utmost exertions of her skill would be employed for a series of years in repairing her internal damage from the storm of the Revolution, and settling on a secure foundation the disordered interests of the Republic; or they who, rejecting these sage admonitions, rashly plunged into the War, predicting it would be a short one, and its issue fortunate for this Country. Who best deserve the confidence of the Public? They who by their ill-planned and ill-conducted hostilities upon the Continent have actually aggrandized the French Republic; and yet, with a strange obstinacy would attempt to retrieve what their impolicy has thrown into the grasp of France, by repeating an experiment already found so unfortunate; or they who have always advised pacific measures, and now, more than ever, recommend them; whose plan for supporting the grandeur of Britain is deep and comprehensive; not formed on superficial views, or for the narrow purposes of selfish ambition; but calculated on the sure grounds of experience to secure the lasting prosperity of the Empire; whose wisdom would immediately terminate this disastrous War, if Peace on safe and equitable terms were found to be attainable; but if such terms, on a fresh overture, could not be attained, whose liberal policy, by restoring the true principles of the Constitution, and introducing an Admini-

stration at once firm and popular, vigorous and æconomical, would enable this free, and by them, United Nation, NOW, and in the AGES TO COME, to maintain her INDEPENDENCE with a lofty hand, and successfully to resist the Power of France, however formidably augmented by the rashness and obstinacy of the present Administration.

4. But ashamed of their misrepresentations, our Opponents resort to a new cavil. Why, they ask, do Senators Secede, or private Men complain that Liberty is in danger, when the Minister, by consenting to the re-establishment of Juries in their ancient Right, has given an ample additional security to the People, and proved that his Administration is not unfriendly to Liberty? To this we answer, that if Parliament be once lost to the Public by its servile subjection to the Cabinet, no Civil Right will be safe for a single Session; every protesting privilege may be voted away with as much facility as the Habeas Corpus Law has been suspended. What the Minister has conferred, the Minister, at his pleasure, may resume. Privileges, precariously held by Juries, cannot lessen the necessity to Secede: They may increase the efficacy of popular interference; they cannot render Secession, with a view to obtain it, improper or unreasonable. In a crisis of great danger, and in a state of Parliament which is utterly hopeless without the lawful interposition of the People, Secession

then, and not till then, becomes an act of duty to the Public.

But here we readily acknowledge the importance of the regulation alluded to. With the rest of the Minister's system it appears incompatible. But it is not our business to explain his inconsistencies; neither is it our wish to depreciate what he has done well. We willingly commend this concession; and we admit, that, from a long series of acts which indisputably evince his guilt, one beneficial measure, in which he concurred, may be selected. For while the Minister's share of praise for this measure is allowed him, it must not be forgotten that the restoration of the Right of Juries is principally to be ascribed to two Senators, the foremost of his Opponents. The first a Man \* born to unite accomplishments and virtues seemingly opposite; who joins to the softest philanthropy, the firmness and vigour of a philosophic mind; and, to the wisdom of an experienced Statesman, adds the eloquence of a Demosthenes, and the zeal of a Patriot in the cause of Liberty; and linked in friendship with him, that intrepid Man †, who first combated the prejudices of the Bar and

\* The Honourable C. J. Fox.

† The Honourable T. Erskine.

the Bench, before he attempted to conquer those of the Senate ; whose passion for Liberty is the natural glow of a mind at once ardent and benevolent ; whose eloquence and learning fit him to plead the Cause of his Country ; who treads with firm and rapid steps that honourable course which Somers trod before him.

5. The last objection which we shall beg leave to state relates to ourselves. It may be said, that we stand self-contradicted, and our invidious allegation of the peril and tyranny of the times is confuted by the freedom we have not feared to use in this discussion. To this observation our answer shall be brief. What we have written has been the result of our conviction, that the Country is in danger ; and that safety can only be found in those measures to which the Secession we have thus freely vindicated is a continual exhortation. In stating our sentiments to the Public, with all the force of argument which our feeble powers would permit, we have but complied with the dictates of duty. We trust that we have fallen into no indecency of expression ; we are well assured, that we have not exceeded the bounds of legality. That there may be danger in this conduct, we are aware. We affect not to magnify, but we are prepared to meet it. We have not forgotten that the

Cabinet possess the unlimited Power of IMPRISONMENT. Aged as we are, and bowed with infirmities, we are ill able to sustain the pressure of those hardships, which a rigorous exercise of that Power might possibly inflict. Perhaps the Cabinet are too candid, or too politic, thus to oppress innocent Men. Whether Mr. Pitt be capable of acting with so much rancour and malignity, we know not. We hope that he is not. But still the abuse of unlimited Power is possible. The Cabinet of Charles the First oppressed the virtuous Elliot, whose only fault was the honest performance of his duty. Guilty of no breach of Law, he perished by the worst of deaths, the slow torture of a dissolution, effected by the hardships of a prison. But the fear of possible oppression will not justify the non-performance of our duty to the Public. We trust to the PROTECTION OF THE LAW. But if Law should be unable to protect, if the fate of the generous Elliot should await us, may we meet it with his unshaken fortitude ! May the smile of APPROVING HEAVEN console and cheer us to the last !

H. E. M.  
DUPL.









